

A Christ-Exalting Marriage (Pt. 2)
The Christ-Exalting Husband
Christ Community Church / Ryan Patty / 8.16.20
1 Peter 3:7

Good morning Christ Community Church! Thankful that we still get to worship together this morning. Welcome to any who are visiting with us, either in person or on the live-stream. While these last five months have been fun for no one, we as Christians can still rest in our sovereign Lord that he is working out all things for our good and His glory. We *need* to believe that during this time. If you weren't able to join us last week, we are in 1 Peter chapter 3. I invite you to turn there in your bibles or on your device. Last week's message and today's have an overarching title of "the Christ-exalting marriage." Last week, from verses 1-6, we looked at the Christ-exalting wife.

How she submits to the leadership of her own husband, not all men, and how she honors and affirms him in that role. We looked at how her adornment is one that never fades, a gentle and quiet spirit that is actually a condition of the soul. We saw how her supreme hope in God above all else *fuels* her fearlessness while living in this fallen world. While waiting until King Jesus comes once more. She is a woman who rightly fears God and because of that she is fearless.

But what is the role, the responsibility, of a husband on this side of eternity? That's what we will seek to look at today. And while much will be referenced from last week, I still want to take a moment and remind us of the effects of the fall on our marriages. How since the fall of mankind, of Adam and Eve's transgression of God's command, now since that time, there has been sin in our lives and this means sin in our marriages. So the ideal headship and submission relationship between a man and a wife is distorted and marred.

As we looked at, the sinful tendency of many wives is to not want to submit, or to rebel, and the sinful tendency of many husbands is to not want to actively lead, therefore they revert to a domineering relationship with their wife, or one that is defined by passivity. Now as I said last week, if that domineering has turned into domestic violence or

physical abuse, then call the police, call us and we will do all that we can to help. That is not how these passages are to ever be understood.

But to focus on the other side of the coin for a moment, Men, in general, have become passive. Whether through the downgrading of masculinity through our culture and society, or through a natural tendency to allow someone else to lead, or through an unhealthy marriage where the wife has to do everything, the sinfulness of passivity has affected all of us as men to some degree. Adam's failure to step up as the serpent was deceiving his wife, and then his subsequent excuse of blaming her when God questioned him, reveals how this passivity rears its head in our marriages. We fail to step-up and lead, and we make excuses as to why or why not when confronted about it.. (so guard your hearts against that very thing this morning men). A good pastor friend of mine wrote the following on his blog concerning absent fathers, but there is much similarity here for a passive husband. Matt writes.

"As sons of Adam, the propensity to hide is in all of us. Hiding out for a few extra hours in the office is easier than coming home to do the hard work of parenting. It is much easier to hide out in the basement watching TV than to gather the family together for prayer. Fatherlessness can take different shapes and sizes. A family can be fatherless even when Dad is physically on the premises. Fatherlessness is a problem for families when Dad is there but not there. He is in the house, but entirely absent. He is disengaged and disinterested. He is present, but not spiritually, emotionally, intentionally, lovingly, authoritatively, and didactically invested in his wife and children. He is hiding from God, his wife, and his children."

And to paint this passivity in a broad stroke, the man works, comes home, eats dinner, says good night to the kids, cracks open a beer to watch the game till 10:30 at night and then after asks his wife if she wants to be intimate... that's the men we have as leaders today. Nevermind all the opportunities he missed to serve her and build her up since coming home. To clean up around the house, to mentally and physically engage with her and the kids, to clean up after dinner, to help with bedtime. Nevermind any of those things... that man is infected with passivity (Piper).

And so what we need in our marriages, and within the church today, is for us to be marked by repentance for where we each of us, husband and wife, have failed. We need to be marked by the ability to show grace and forgiveness to our spouse for those failings. We need all of us to have a better understanding of what the biblical role for a husband and a wife is; and how when those roles are properly understood, exercised, and lived out, it makes our marriages not just something to be a part of, but rather a union that **flourishes** and is a **testimony** of God's goodness to a fallen world. We, in a smaller way, model this beautiful relationship between Christ and His church which proclaims the light of the Gospel into a dark and sinful world.

So as we land in 1 Peter this morning, allow me to once again remind us of the context. The heading for this entire section comes in 1 Peter 2 as Peter has something to say concerning our relationship, really our witness, to an unbelieving world. So he writes in 1 Peter 2:11-12 - **2:11-12 - "Dear friends, I urge you as strangers and exiles to abstain from sinful desires that wage war against the soul. Conduct yourselves honorably among the Gentiles, so that when they slander you as evildoers, they will observe your good works and will glorify God on the day he visits."**

We are strangers and exiles in a world, awaiting a perfected and new one, and while we wait, it is our conduct of good works that is, in part, a testimony to this world of God. So Peter shows us what submission looks like to governing authorities, then he shows us what it looks like in an occupation and the relation of servant to master, and now we have been seeing what submission and authority looks like in the sphere of the home. Let's read 1 Peter 3:7 - **7 Likewise,**(he is continuing his thought concerning relationships in the home) **husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.** (ESV)

Let's Pray.

My friends, with our time, this morning, I want to draw out four characteristics *from this passage* of a Christ-Exalting Husband. Four characteristics. And I know, I had four characteristics last week but it's honestly just how the text worked out. Four things a Godly husband and man does:

He 1. Leads - to the glory of God

As with last week, I want us to see how both submission and headship, that is leadership in the home, are to be done to the glory of God. This entire point is really assumed and demonstrated from this passage and the Ephesians 5 passage. After looking at the role and calling of a Christian wife, Peter now turns to the role and calling of a Christian husband. How does a Christian husband act out his God-given role as the head of the wife? How does he lead her in a God-honoring and god-fearing way? Those are questions we will seek to answer. But this man, this husband, leads to the glory of God. That is the calling, the role, the vocation if you will. He is the head of his home to the glory of God. So last week I gave you a definition of biblical submission, this week, allow me to give one for biblical headship.

Biblical headship (leading) **is the divine calling of a husband to lovingly lead, honor, and protect his wife** (and family) **in a Christ-like manner.** While we men and women cannot do their roles all the time perfectly, we, nonetheless, by the power of the Spirit, are called and gifted to work hard within these God-given roles (Piper).

A Christian husband recognizes that just as a Christian wife is called to submit to his leadership, he needs to actively be leading in such a way that it both builds up his wife and honors Christ as Lord. Paul tells us in Ephesians 5, that **“23 For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior.”** And then tells us in the command in v. 25 **“25 Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.”** In other words, the way a wife submits to her husband should be, in part, a picture of how the *church* submits to *Christ*. And the way a husband leads his wife should be, in part, a picture of how *Christ* leads the *church*. Collectively then marriage gives us a greater picture of our place in the Gospel, and when these things are done rightly, it brings glory to God!

But notice the command for the husband from Peter and from Paul. Husbands, **live** with your wives, husbands **love** your wives. Men, leading will most manifest itself through how you love and cherish your wife. “Leading is not the

right to command and control her. Rather it is the responsibility to love like Christ; to lay down your life for your wife in servant leadership.”

As you live with your wife, what does an active role of leadership look like in your home? You need to be able to clearly answer this. Does your leadership show itself to be active? Does it show itself to be sacrificial (as Christ loved the Church by laying down his life for her)? Do you sacrifice your wants and desires to better love her, or do you always need your time away, and your time alone, or your time with the boys? Are you more than just physically present, but emotionally and mentally present as well. Make sacrifices to demonstrate your leadership and demonstrate your love for her.

For example, when I get home from work, I'll often ask how the day was. Now my wife, God bless her, will give me a minute-by-minute account of the day. What she did with the kids, who she visited with or encouraged, how did the kids act up, where did they go that day. It literally can take 25 minutes. Now men, we aren't always like that. When she asks the question of how my day is, I have learned that she is looking for more than just “good.” She wants to hear what I did, who I met with, what I debated the other pastors over, she wants the details. And my mind is like “this is exhausting, I don't want to revisit everything I did.” But she loves me, and enjoys hearing about my day. A simple way I can sacrifice my wants is to be mentally engaged with her and to include her in my day. Now I know this is a silly example, but for each of us it will be different, men. We will need to work to figure out what that sacrificial love looks like in each of our marriages.

Likewise, God created us as men who work. The creation mandate to work is pre-fall. We are created to work hard in life, but what we need to remember is that that work-calling is still applicable in the home (as a husband and a father). Yes, you might be exhausted from a long days work, but in many cases so is your spouse. In some measure, we often expect more of our wives than we ourselves are willing to put out. However, we are called, as the leaders of our families, to exhaust ourselves, even if it means daily, in order to fulfill our calling as leader. So you come home mentally tired and physically tired (you have worked to the glory of God, but now that work to the glory of God is going to take place in the home), and you have three rug-rats pounce on you, you wrestle them. You give mom a break. You notice what can be picked up around the house, you ask her what she needs from you. You help

with putting them down. You connect with your wife while they are asleep. While you have been off working, so has she. You lead by taking initiative in the home just like you would at work. And when you are exhausted, you go to bed exhausted to the glory of God, you wake up and do it again... and that's a part of what active leadership looks like. I'm preaching to myself here.

And lastly, what does leading your wife spiritually look like? Do you encourage her in her bible reading, prayer, her meditation on the word. When was the last time you prayed with your wife? Do you notice when you yourself are slacking in this, and how it affects her? Do you come alongside her or your family and demonstrate a Christ-like love and care for their spiritual health? Do you want to see her mature in the faith, to grow in holiness, to flourish under your leadership? Are these things at the forefront of your mind? Don't tell me it's too much. From sports teams, to fishing and hunting, to any other hobby, we can learn and memorize some facts real fast. Don't neglect your spiritual health or hers. It is a part of your leadership in the home.

We are called to lead. To lead by sacrificially loving our spouse and families, and to exhaust ourselves for them mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually. May we as the men of Christ Community embrace that calling and live it out to the glory of God.

He 2. Understands - who God has made her to be
“husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way...”

Men, how often have we been around other men and heard the joke, “man, I’ll just never understand women!” Well, this is true. But guess what guys? You don’t have to understand all women, you only have to understand one. “Live with YOUR wife in an understanding way..” The text literally says, “according to knowledge..” In other words, you have to work at getting to know her, at seeking to understand her, of desiring to learn more about her..’ Not all women, just the one woman God has gifted to you. Seek to understand her for her rather than trying to make her some womanly version of yourself. When counseling a young married couple, it never fails to amaze me how much we as men really just love ourselves! If our wives were like us, *all* our marital problems would just disappear. We can’t fall for that trap. God has gifted her in different areas than you, and she IS different than you. Recognize and understand this.

A Christ-Exalting Husband recognizes this and works at it. Just as we saw that submission takes work on the part of the wife, so does understanding her take work on the husband’s part. And husband’s, hear me clearly, be a life-long learner of your wife. She is not the exact same woman you married. She might have a different strength today that she used to not have, but also maybe a different weakness. She might have had a certain dream in life while younger, but now she has a different one. She might have loved milk-chocolate for 16 years, but now loves dark-chocolate. Know, understand, and learn how she has changed in small things and in grand things. She is not the same woman you married. And men, this includes her love languages.

You remember that book that came out years ago about the five love languages in a marriage? Acts of service, words of affirmation, quality time, giving gifts, and physical touch? There is probably some truth in there. Men, we are typically pretty easy to categorize (we usually begin and end in the realm of physical touch)... and we tend to stay the same. Again, I’m speaking generally so show me grace. But men, your wife is not like you. She might have loved your words of affirmation for the first five years of marriage, but add in 2 kids and a baby on the way and I guarantee she would love for you to serve her through doing the dishes. Learn this. Learn her. And realize that not

only can her love language change by the year, but by the month or even week. It's probably written down on the marriage agreement somewhere... Be a student. The text says live with her according to knowledge; get to know her well and continue to know her well.

Illustration: I remember some months back during the winter my wife called me while I was working and said that the power went out. In my typical understanding way, I say I'm sorry, thanks for letting me know, and I hope it comes back on, and then I went back to work. Honestly I don't think it even crossed my mind for the last two hours before I headed home. Now, think of what is going on at my house. At the time, a rambunctious 4 year old and two year old. We have a newborn in the house as well. There is snow outside and it's too much to get them dressed to play for 10 minutes before they want to come back in. She also probably wants to conserve the heat inside. There's no hot water and no power to the oven so that she can begin dinner. The kids are extra crazy because the lights are off and mom lit a candle and so everything is just super cool.

Couple these details with the fact that, as my wife loves to say, I get to have adult conversations all day while she predominantly talks to children, and she was battling some postpartum depression. So, yours truly comes waltzing in a few hours after that call, at my normal time for coming home, and even though I knew the power was out I didn't think anything of it. (We are men, we adapt and overcome, right). And she's thinking, I wish he would have tried to come home early, maybe picked up something to eat, at least acknowledge the difficulty of the situation. But again, I come waltzing in, kids are going crazy and yours truly says something to the effect of, "You haven't started dinner?"

Now men, I had gloriously failed to understand my wife that day. To take her into consideration. I was consumed with MY responsibilities and MY duties that I didn't stop to think of any of Her difficulties. Fight against that. Fight to, as I said, know and understand and learn your wife. Your marriage will be blessed and better for it.

He 3. Honors - her as a coheir

“showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life”

The way you seek to understand your wife will reveal itself in how you honor her (2x). These go hand in hand. Peter instructs the Christian husband to live in an understanding way with his wife and to show her honor as the weaker vessel. There are some things we need to uncover here.

To honor, means to esteem, to hold in high regard, to value, and to cherish. It means to make it clear in speech and in conduct that she is a gift that you dearly value, and that others recognize that. Your children growing up in your home are learning what marriage means by watching you and your spouse. Is that a scary thought or an encouraging one? What example, husbands, do we want to set for them? When daddy is rude to mommy, you better believe I am pulling Jed and Blakely together and apologizing to them and to Laura and telling them that it is not okay. I want them to see clearly, again not perfectly for none is perfect except for Jesus, but to see daily, weekly, yearly, that dad loves mom. That he honors her and thinks of her in a high regard. We need the next generation to have a first-hand view of a Christ-Exalting marriage.

So he honors her, and Peter gives us a phrase to clarify this honoring. “Showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel.”

He honors her as the weaker vessel. Now what does this mean? I don't take the weaker vessel language to imply weaker *intellectually, spiritually, or morally*. That's clear both from this passage and from the bible as a whole. Now what the debate has centered around within the church is does this language mean women are physically weaker, emotionally weaker, or both? I primarily take this to language to be in the physical sense, but there is a warning within the emotional sense. Let me clarify the emotional argument first.

We have all heard the language and the stereotypes thrown out that women are more emotional than men. And there are scientific and psychiatric studies that show this. So I think it is probably fair to say that, generally speaking, women have easier access to their emotions than men do. But does emotionality equal weakness? Is that what

Peter is saying here? I don't think so. Emotions are a gift from God. They help us experience this life in wonderful ways. As someone who is reminded by both my wife and Pastor Daniel often that I have very subdued emotions, I recognize that emotions in and of themselves are a great thing. Now like other parts of us, that Fall has corrupted them and we must fight to be in control of them. But the display of emotion in no way means weak. Think of our Lord Jesus.

In his seminal essay, "The Emotional Life of Our Lord," theologian B. B. Warfield argues clearly that Jesus perfectly displayed the huge range of emotions: love, joy, anger, sorrow to name a few. But the emotion that Jesus displayed the most was this, compassion. He was marked by his compassion, by his mercy. Generally speaking, women are more compassionate than men, more merciful. So the argument just does not follow that a greater display of emotions equates to weakness. Now to be sure, as I said with the fall, we never want to be *ruled* by our emotions, for that signifies weakness. When your emotions and how you *feel* about something or about yourself are telling you one thing, and God's word is clearly telling you something else, then we as Christians understand which one of those takes precedence. We submit our lives, our emotions, our affections to the truth revealed in God's Word. So no, Emotions are not a sign of weakness, but emotions unchecked are. And this can happen in both men and women. Ever seen some dudes yelling at the TV during a game? Men, women aren't the only emotional creatures here. So I don't take emotions or even the greater display of emotions to be a weakness. The Fall affects us all in various ways.

But I do take this weaker vessel language to be physical. The average man is larger and stronger than the average woman. This is clear to the reasonable person. This is why we have men's and women's sports and olympics. There are clear physical differences between the two sexes. I recognize that we live in a culture that is in many measures trying to erase these distinctions, but it is absurd to think there is not clearly a physical difference. And I think the physical interpretation of this text finds strength when we do a word study on "vessel." Where else is this used? Paul uses it in Romans 9 to describe the vessels of wrath, clearly an indication of physical beings. But I think the most helpful verse is found in 2 Cor. 4:7 - "But we have this treasure in jars [vessels] of clay, to show that the surpassing

power belongs to God and not to us.” Paul’s talking here about having the Gospel shine in our hearts and change our lives completely, and he says that we have this amazing thing in a jar of clay, an earthen vessel, that he will later say in v. 16 is wasting away. Again clearly physical. So the weaker vessel is primarily relating to physicality. The majority of wives are not as physically strong as their husbands.

And so what Peter is encouraging the Christian husband to do here is to honor her as such, to honor her as a weaker vessel. In this time and culture, the concept of “pater familias” reigned in society. What the father of the house said was law for that house, even to the point of death. And Peter here, in a beautifully counter-cultural way, encourages the Christian husband to not reign like a tyrant, to not show headship through domination or abuse, to not use his greater physical strength to rule his wife, but rather to honor her and cherish her as a gift from God. Men, because of the fall, you will have the temptation to disdain that which is weaker. To crush it. So husbands, when you sense vulnerability in your wife or a weakness within her, the sinful temptation is to crush it or take advantage of it. Don’t. Resist that temptation at all cost. Honor her, value her, uphold her, come alongside her and lead her. Treat her with gentleness and love and respect. And similar to last week, being physically weaker does not mean that women are inferior to men. Women are not less than men anymore than my eye or brain, which are both incredibly sensitive and physically vulnerable, are less than my elbow. This is not at all an issue of worth but of recognizing the God-given differences between the two of us and recognizing this as a **good** thing!

And Peter further clarifies the honor she is to receive - as one who is an heir, a coheir with you husband, of the grace of life. Rather than just the male inheriting everything, she, a woman of God created in the image of God, is a coheir of this future grace that we as Christians will experience. It is as Paul writes in **Galatians 3:28 - “28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”** Our salvation does not depend upon our sex, there is complete equality and unity in Christ. You, husband, are an adopted son of God, she is an adopted daughter of God, and our share, our inheritance in eternity will be equal, meaning we both have eternal life! So treat her, honor her, cherish her as such! She is God’s partner for you in this life of Gospel mission and she is to be valued as honored as such.

4. Fears - the One who sees all

Let me read the whole verse once more, and pay close attention to the end. **7 Husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.**

That's a sobering statement, is it not? Peter instructs us men that if we fail to live with our wives in an understanding way, if we fail to show them honor as the weaker vessel and as a coheir in Christ, then your prayers will be hindered. In other words, men, there is a connection between how you treat your wife and your relationship with God. We cannot expect to have certain things in conformity with God's Word and hold on to other areas of our lives that are in rejection of it.

And the reason I have entitled this point, "He fears the one who sees all," is that we as men need to have a healthy awe and fear of God. This will change the way you lead. We need to be captivated by this God that can consume us, yet at the same time through Christ draws us into fellowship with him. The very God who calls us to lead as Jesus does. We need to be reminded that he sees all things. He sees when we fail and fall short, he sees those moments that are disrespectful, unloving, uncaring, and harsh. He sees them all. We can't hide them. We can't think there are sinful areas of our life that just because they are hidden from others, means that they are hidden from God. That's foolishness. He sees all things. Even Peter is going to go here in a few verses, look at v. 12 of this chapter and the quote that he draws out from the Psalms (1 Peter 3:12) **12 For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil."**

His eyes are on the righteous and he hears their prayers. By the blood of His Son he overlooks your shortcomings and failures because you have embraced Christ as Lord. But if you willfully sinning, if you are willfully trying to hide something, and willfully refusing to repent of it, then that is evil. And the face of the Lord is against you and you should fear His coming judgment.

Men we have to be willing to confess and repent. We have to lead by example in this. We have to be willing to see our marriages as beacons of the Gospel to a lost and dying world. We have to seriously heed these instructions of

Peter if we truly don't want our prayers hindered. We have to lead to the glory of God. We have to understand our wives and who God has made them to be. We have to honor them as a coheir. And we have to truly fear the one who sees all.

As with last week, allow me to ask four questions, one from each point, that cause us to reflect as husbands and men. Four questions.

1. Husbands, **How are you actively leading your wife and family? Where are you failing to do so?** (I realize this is two) Or do you need to repent to them for maybe some months or even years of lingering passivity.
2. Husbands, **Have you truly sought to understand your wife, or have you subtly tried to change her to your liking?**
3. Husbands, **Is it clear that you honor and value your wife?** In the way you talk to her, in the way you talk about her with family or friends. Is it clear to others in how you communicate about her that she is a precious gift from God and that you, her husband, truly believe that?
4. Lastly, husbands, men, **Do we truly fear the God who sees all things?** The God that knows our deepest and darkest sins and yet still loves us? Or are we trying to hide something in the dark, something we are failing to confess? May it never be so of the men at Christ Community Church.

Praise God for the Gospel. Praise God for sending his Son Jesus Christ to rescue and redeem a wayward and broken people. We can't do it on our own. And If there is conviction in your heart right now, praise God. The Spirit is working in your life. I pray you didn't hear me preaching, last week or this week, that we need to be perfect wives and perfect husbands. We know that we can't. Like David says, "our sins, our short-comings, are ever before us." But look to Christ when you do fall short. Look to your perfect Savior, and be men and women, wives and husbands, who show grace and love to one another. In a world devoid of it, we are called to be something radically different.

Pray with me.